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in close relation to the Commercial Code are translated in the Appendix; the Custody of Negotiable Instruments Act, 1896, and the Private Limited Companies Act, 1898. Book four of the Commercial Code, which deals exclusively with maritime law, has been omitted from the translation, as it generally is from the commentaries and treatises on the Code. Mr. Wendt has, indeed, already translated into English that portion of the Code. The work is well indexed. It should prove a welcome addition to the English literature on German legal institutions, rendered more necessary from year to year by the constantly increasing intercourse with Germany.

E. M. B.

The Territorial Basis of Government under the State Constitutions.

By A. Z. REED. (New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1911. pp. 250.)

This recent number of the Columbia Studies does not deal with the whole subject of the territorial basis of state government, but with the somewhat more restricted field of the constitutional limitations which rest upon the state legislatures in creating local subdivisions for purposes of local government and of legislative apportionment. The work constitutes a very thorough comparative study of all the state constitutions both in their earlier and present forms, including those of Arizona and New Mexico, upon a matter of prime importance for the determination of the relations between state central and local government. There is no evidence in the work, however, that any sources of information have been used other than the bare texts of the Constitutions, and it is to be regretted that little or no reference is made to actual practice under the constitutional provisions.

The special weaknesses of our state system of political subdivisions, the author points out, are "their complexity and the manner in which they discriminate against urban centers" (page 240). When this discrimination against cities is made in the legislative apportionment for representation in one house but not in the other, a system of checks and balances is created between urban house and rural house which would be disastrous were it not for the fact that the interests of parties prevent the deadlock from taking an extreme form. The power of the legislature in making apportionments and in determining its own composition should, the author thinks, be reduced; and, to

this end, he recommends a change from a centralized state government to a system of broad local charters for both rural and urban territory. Other recommendations made are greater proportionate representation for cities and the abolition of all distinction between the two branches of the legislature, except a longer term for the members of one house.

The usefulness of the book is increased by the addition of a bibliographical note containing citations of state constitutions and amendments thereto.

J. M. MATHEWS.

France and the American Revolution. By JAMES BRECK PERKINS.
(Houghton, Mifflin. Boston, 1911.)

This posthumous volume was practically completed at the time of Mr. Perkins' death. Such changes as were necessary have been made by his wife who was able to perform this duty of love with due appreciation of her husband's intention and habits of thought. She has consulted, during the process of preparing the volume for the press, eminent authors in the field; and the book is approximately such as Mr. Perkins would have wished it. The author, from his wide knowledge of continental and particularly French history, was eminently prepared to write a sympathetic account of the participation of France in the American Revolution, and this he has effectively done. Past historians have been too prone to take at their face value the suspicions of John Jay and John Adams, commissioners to France at the time of the treaty of peace, and to discount the better informed statements of Benjamin Franklin, whose intimate knowledge of French life and habits of thought and the complications of European diplomacy, should have given to his opinion greater weight than that of his companions. The whole tone of the book is one of hearty commendation for French action during the War. Mr. Perkins gives due appreciation to the character and work of Vergennes, who was more responsible than any one else for the assistance given by his country to the revolting colonies.

The work is largely based, as far as the French events are concerned, upon the printed sources in Doniol's *Histoire de la Participation de France*, and Durand's *New Materials*. Besides what was available in these volumes, there is a large mass of unprinted material in the French archives, to which Mr. Perkins makes no reference and which